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## Guest Artist Recital:Stephen Swedish, Piano

Stephen Swedish Piano  
*Illinois State University*

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*Music Department  
Illinois State University*

*Guest Artist Recital  
Stephen Swedish, Piano  
with Julian Dawson, Piano*



The eighty-third program of the 2000-2001 Season.

Kemp Recital Hall  
Wednesday Evening  
February 28, 2001  
8:00 p.m.

## Program

from *Miroirs Suite* (1904-05)  
Oiseaux tristes (Sorrowful Birds)  
La vallee des cloches (The Valley of the Bells)  
Alborada del Gracioso (Laughing Song of the Clown)

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1937)

Andante Spianato & Grand Polonaise, Op. 22

Frédéric Chopin  
(1810-1849)

## Intermission

*En blanc et noir* (1915)  
for Two Pianos

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op.56b  
for Two Pianos

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

*with Julian Dawson, piano*

## Program Notes

### *Miroirs Suite*

The title *Miroirs* express the idea of reflection - sonic reflection - and is very appropriate for this set of pieces. It was composed during the years 1904-1905, and each of its five pieces is dedicated to one of his friends, who called themselves the "Apaches."

### *Oiseaux Tristes*

In Ravel's words, *Oiseaux Tristes* is the most characteristic piece in the set. In this work, the composer evokes birds lost in the torpor of a somber forest, during the most torrid hours of summertime, but perhaps we can more easily imagine caged birds, sad at their loss of freedom. At one moment in the middle of the piece, one can even hear their desperate attempt to escape.

### *La Vallee Des Cloches*

Ravel dedicated *La Vallee Des cloches* (The Valley of Bells) to his only student, Maurice Delage. It demands the most delicate touch to give the impression of varying degrees of tonality in the bell sounds which dominate the piece. The final four chords, deep in the bass piano, were said by the composer to represent the sound of the "Savoyarde", the big bell of the Basilica of Sacre Coeur in Montmartre Paris.

### *Alborada Del Gracioso*

Ravel was always enamoured of the music of Spain. He wrote many works utilizing spanish rhythms and sonorities, and *Alborada Del Gracioso* is one of them. It is, in the view of most pianists who have tackled it pianistic difficulties, one of the most challenging works ever written for the instrument. Its fiendish repeated notes and double-note glissandi are famous among pianists. Its music is definitely spanish and is a mixture of lyricism with numerous guitar-like effects.

### *En blanc et noir*

*En blanc et noir*, written in 1915, is a set of three separate pieces. The title means "In black and white" suggesting light and dark, or serious and playful. Debussy originally called the piece "Caprices". The first piece comments on four lines from a poem "Romeo et Juliette" by Jules Barbier and M. Carre: "He who keeps to his place and doesn't join the dance, must take the consequences"; it is light and flowingly humorous. The second piece is dedicated to the memory of a friend who had just been killed in the First World War. It is full of references to military signals and thundering guns and it includes the Choral: "Ein feste Burg" at one point; some lines from a "Ballade against the enemies of France" are quoted. The last piece is dedicated to Stravinsky. It is headed with a line: "Winter, you are just a scoundrel" and Debussy playfully uses its Neo-Classicism as a homage to his friend Stravinsky.

## *Biography*



"It was aristocratic playing which reminded this listener of the legendary Dinu Lipatti." So wrote the leading critic of the Los Angeles Times of a recital performance by pianist **Stephen Swedish**. Swedish has served on the artist faculties of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Texas Christian University (at the request of the legendary pianist Lili Kraus), the University of Maryland, and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. He has also served on the faculty of several important European music festivals including the American Academy of the Arts in Europe. Mr. Swedish is pianist of the Kapell Trio, an ensemble that was formed several years ago to promote American classical music and commission new American compositions. He has performed in recital as soloist and collaborator throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe, Japan, and South America, and has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Milwaukee Symphony, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the Haydn Festival Orchestra of Austria and many others. His recent tour as Artistic Ambassador for the U.S. included performances and master classes in Cyprus, Malta, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan and is the subject of a just-completed book by Mr. Swedish. Among the many artists with whom he has collaborated are violinists Josef Gingold, and Eugene Fodor, violist William Primrose, and cellists Janos Starker, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Ronald Thomas and Andre Emeliano. He has appeared on numerous television programs including the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, the Merv Griffin Show, the Today Show and others. Mr. Swedish has recorded on the RCA Red Seal, Mercury, and Gasparo labels.